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ABSTRACT

In Massachusetts municipalities there exists the need to develop at the policy-making, fiscal and administrative levels, an awareness, understanding and knowledge of the functions, objectives and roles of both the public library and the school media program in relation to children and young adults. To this end there should be joint administrative and fiscal planning involving boards of trustees, directors of public libraries, school administrators, superintendents and school committees. Total library media service to the young people of the community presupposes effective working relationships at a decision-making level for both resource centers. The functions of each library program are clearly distinct in the educational scheme of every municipality. Neither can presently provide nor should attempt to provide the services of the other. The local public library cannot hope to provide the necessary materials either in the proximity or the perspective which is required of a good education program. At the same time a school library/media cannot hope to provide the kind of service which may be found at the local public library. Both resource centers should continue to service children fulfilling their related but distinct roles. (Author)

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POSITION PAPER

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THE COMMUNITY'S EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS:
Public Libraries/School Media Programs

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"CAPACITY AND DESIRE FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Education should foster and stimulate in each learner the natural desire for lifelong learning and should develop the skills necessary to fulfill that desire."

EDUCATIONAL GOALS FOR MASSACHUSETTS, 1971

Introduction

Libraries of all types are intrinsic to education. They are a vital and integral part of every municipality's total education resources. They are basic to the cultural and economic development of every citizen, to their health, safety and welfare. Libraries support all phases of formal and informal education; they enrich the lives of individuals and consequently the life of the whole community. Support and development of libraries is indicative of a significant and lasting investment in a community's human resources.

The Massachusetts Bureau of Library Extension, placed within the Division of Curriculum and Instruction in the State Department of Education, is the sole agency in the Commonwealth which has regulatory contact with and legal responsibility for the total library enterprise in the State. Operating under a State Board of Library Commissioners, through the State Board of Education, the Bureau strives to promote, support and implement the development and maintenance of adequate educational media programs--taken to include both the municipal public libraries and the schools' educational media programs throughout the State--to assure ultimately the most effective, most beneficial services for all library users.

Massachusetts is committed to excellence in library service. Its library statutes recognize the responsibility of the State to aid cities and towns in providing library services. Legislative action has provided for direct State aid for public library service in the 351 cities and towns and for a statewide, state-financed program of regional public library systems. As a result of this legislation substantial strides have been made to marshal and coordinate library programs of all types in an integrated network in order to produce media resources and educational attainment at all age levels, for business, industry and government. The resources of both the public library and school media programs play an important part in the further development of this statewide coordination and networking of educational resources. Therefore it is the policy of the Bureau of Library Extension to be concerned with the role, development, funding and coordination of both these public educational media/resource programs in the community.

The rapid and enthusiastic endorsement in various quarters of such educational concepts as open campus, independent study, cultivation of learning process outside the four walls of the classroom, continuous school year, etc. dramatically points out the need for a constant reviewing and reassessment

of the basic objectives of public library service and those of the local educational media program. But such a reassessment or reordering of emphasis is best approached in terms of service to the individual user, with a disregard for the 'layering of libraries' by types. The place and the importance of the community's public library and the local school system's educational resource center, particularly in relation to serving the school-age child and young adult, is and will continue to be debated by practicing professionals, educators and municipal officials. Both viewpoints, opposition and support, need scrupulous examination in terms of total satisfaction and fulfillment of the school-age child's and young adult's informational, educational, cultural and recreational needs which must be assured.

Recognition of the importance of both the public library and the school's media program in the municipality's educational scheme for children and young people is basic. Both schools and public libraries share the common goal of furthering the growth of children and young adults through reading and related resources with the purpose of developing an educated and responsible citizenry. It is in their individual attempts to achieve this goal that each makes a special contribution in performing the *related but distinct roles*.

Role of the School Library/Educational Media Program[1]

To effectively guide the development of today's student in the field of formal education a full program of educational media service is required. The media program provides the laboratory for research where children and young people develop library and study skills, reading tastes, judgment and appreciation. Here the learner is guided in finding materials suited to his own abilities, needs and interests and is stimulated to explore beyond the classroom and the school. In the educational media center one finds:

1. materials for class instruction and individual investigation and explanation;
2. materials created and produced to suit special needs of students and teachers;
3. instruction to improve learning through the use of printed and audio visual resources;
4. efficient working areas for student, faculty and media staff;
5. information on new educational development.[2]

Modern teaching methods depend for their success upon the cross media approach to learning. The educational media center becomes the place within the school which is charged with the responsibility to gather and coordinate the varied materials needed for learning and the equipment required for the use of these materials. The distinctive role of the media center in serving children and young adults is defined by what is taught in the school. The educational media specialist and/or school librarian develops the program in cooperation with the faculty and with the approval of the school administration.

Role of the Public Library

To effectively provide for the steady process of intellectual growth for all citizens, from the pre-school child to the senior citizen, municipalities support public libraries. The public library serves the self-motivated reading, informational, recreational and cultural needs of all segments of the population. Its resources and services, comprised of a comprehensive collection of book and non-book materials, essential components of both the formal and informal municipal education programs, are provided:

1. to facilitate informal self-education of all people in the community;
2. to enrich and further develop subjects on which individuals are undertaking formal education;
3. to meet the informational needs of all ages;
4. to support the informational needs of all;
5. to support the educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organizations;
6. to encourage constructive use of leisure time.[3]

The public library, in its services to children and young people is primarily concerned with the needs of the student as an individual member of the community. It provides the student with experience in using the facility which will be his major library resource following formal education.[4] It serves children and young people in their independent, voluntary search for books and reading which are significant to their personal interests and needs.

Defining the roles of the public library and the school's media program in no way negates the possibilities of the public library dealing with curriculum-related materials or the school library dealing with non-curriculum, cultural or practical interests of young people. It is intended simply to outline the particular responsibilities on each side and to define the areas of special contribution. Public libraries and the schools' educational media programs are not in competition with one another in their services to youth. In the performance of each one's basic and unique function both are needed. Proper fulfillments of the role of each in the interest of attaining the common goal of both, undoubtedly will result in an increase in the use of both resources—possibly the need for more, not fewer educational resource outlets for children. The principles contained in the 1961 policy statement of the Committee on School Library Services of the Study Commission, Chief State School Officers[5] listed below and relating to problems in school and public library relationships continue to be relevant in the development of public library resources and educational media programs of today.

a. The school library serves the school, the public library serves the community.
b. Public library service—including service from state, regional, county and community libraries—may supplement

but never supplant the school library. Service which replaces the school library impedes the development of school libraries to the detriment of service to teachers and pupils and tends to separate materials from instructional programs.

c. The school has the primary responsibility for instruction and guidance of children and youth in the community in the use of libraries... School librarians, teachers and public librarians should cooperate in planning instructional programs in the use of libraries for educational and recreational purposes.
d. Cooperative planning in the selection and utilization of materials for children and young people is the responsibility of school administrators, teachers, school librarians, public librarians and other community leaders concerned with youth.

Conclusion

In Massachusetts municipalities there exists the need to develop, at the policy-making, fiscal and administrative levels, an awareness, understanding and knowledge of the functions, objectives and roles of both the public library and the school media program in relation to children and young adults. To this end there should be joint administrative and fiscal planning involving Boards of Trustees, directors of public libraries, school administrators, superintendents and school committees. Total library media service to the young people of the community presupposes effective working relationships at a decision-making level for both resource centers. The functions of each library program are clearly distinct in the educational scheme of every municipality. Neither can presently provide nor should attempt to provide the services of the other. The local public library, regardless of size and depth of collection, cannot hope to provide the necessary materials either in the proximity or the perspective which is required of a good education program. At the same time a school library/media center, with its need for duplication of materials and the limitation in depth of collection and funding, cannot hope to provide the kind of service which may be found at the local public library. Both resource centers should continue to service children fulfilling their *related but distinct roles*.

Recent statistics on the status and development of school libraries in the State over the past five years, under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Title II, strongly suggest the need to continue both quality public library/school library/media programs for children and young people as defined in national standards.[6]

Other recent and eminent studies of Massachusetts education and its related media needs, completed in the past decade, suggest the coexistence of both the public library/school media resources in the community. In 1965

the Report of the Special Commission to Investigate Educational Facilities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts recommended that

> "library resources shall be available in every school to all children and youth"
>
> and clearly recommended also that:
>
> "where public libraries do exist and are separate there shall be cooperative arrangements between the school and public library with reference to resources"[9]

The relationship of fully developed school media programs to the local public library, without doubt, will change in the next decade. This change will intensify the need for meaningful cooperation and networking of library resources. This is convincingly and clearly suggested in a recent report sponsored and released by the Massachusetts Bureau of Library Extension and entitled A Proposed Plan for the Development of State Educational Media Services to Local Education Agencies in Massachusetts. The likely course which public libraries may follow in the future in extending services to children and young people is suggested in the following quote:

> School media programs, when fully developed, should contribute to the need for radical change in public library systems. As media and use of learning materials become more organic to teaching, the charge of public libraries to extend and expand the instructional experience becomes more clear. Sophisticated users of media are already being graduated from high schools; for many of them the public library will afford the sole library service in their adult lives...The role of the public library is not to supply supplementary materials for the school, but to build upon its public's acquired educational experiences so that learning can truly be a lifelong process.[7]

Present status of service to children and young adults in both the public libraries and the schools' media centers of Massachusetts would not warrant at this time an abandoning and/or replacement of the one for the other without seriously affecting the quality of the informational, educational, cultural and recreational programs of the community. Change will occur in the programs offered to young people but the changes will be in the types of programs that are offered by each agency.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Name variations i. e. Educational Media Services, Instructional Materials Center, School Libraries, Learning Resource Centers, et al exist and are used herein interchangeably to convey the same program of facilities, personnel and resources.

[2]American Association of School Libraries and the National Education Association. Standards for school media programs. Chicago: American Library Association, 1969. p. 4.

[3]American Library Association, Public Library Assoc. Minimum Standards for public library systems. Chicago: American Library Association, 1966. p. 9

[4]Ibid. p. 21 .

[5]As quoted in: Mary Helen Mahar. "How do the public library and the school library supplement and complement each other in providing services to children, youth and young adults" paper from the Proceedings of the Eighth Institute on Public Library Management. Wisconsin Free Library Commission, 1961.

[6]Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Library Extension. ESEA Title II Evaluation 1971. Volumes 1 and 2. Mimeographed.

[7]Massachusetts Department of Education, Bureau of Library Extension. A Proposed plan for the development of State Educational Media Services to local education agencies in Massachusetts, by Denise B. Erwin, Consultant. June 1971. p. 10. Mimeographed.

[8]Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Board of Education, Report of the Task Forces on Educational Goals for Massachusetts. Boston: Department of Education, September 1971. p. 7.

[9]Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Report of the Special Commission Established to make an investigation and study relative to improving and extending educational facilities in the Commonwealth. House Bill No. 4300, June 1965. p. 251.

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